

Only one month in, college football goes wild

By Michelle Kaufman
Knight Ridder Newspapers

MIAMI (KRT)— The college football season is barely a month old, and this much we already know:

- The other FSU (Fresno State) has a better chance of finishing in the top five than Bobby Bowden's FSU.
- Penn State icon Joe Paterno will have a tougher time breaking Bear Bryant's record than anybody imagined.
- Bob Davie might not last the season at Notre Dame, where the Fighting Irish are 0-2 for the first time since 1986.

First things first. The Semi-Noles. Could anyone have predicted the North Carolina Tar Heels would obliterate FSU in football? The Tar Heels? A team that was 0-3 before Saturday? A team that was outscored 108-48 in its previous three games?

Saturday's 41-9 loss was Florida State's worst to an unranked team since 1976. It was the Semi-Noles' third ACC loss since joining the conference in 1992, and it left Maryland - yes, Maryland - sitting atop the ACC standings.

How does that happen? On the same note, what in the world is going on in Not-so-Happy Valley? Joe-Pa, who needed just two wins to break Bryant's record for most wins by a Division I coach, is 0-2 after a drubbing by Miami and Saturday's 18-6 loss to Wisconsin.

And the two wins might not come any time soon. The Nittany Lions are at Iowa next week, and then have games against Michigan, Northwestern and Ohio State, the top three teams in the Big Ten.

The once-feared Nittany Lions are 6-12 since opening the 1999 season 9-0. They lost to Pitt and Toledo last year. And it is quite possible they will open this season 0-6.

least, they take a break. But don't blame it all on those two coaches, who know what it takes to win more than any yahoo caller on sports talk radio.

Meanwhile, out at Fresno State, the Bulldogs are proving they're for real. After beating No. 23 Wisconsin at Madison three weeks ago, players held their index fingers to their lips and said, "Shhhh....", as if to say their team was a secret.

Not anymore. Fresno State is 4-0 after beating Tulsa 37-18. The Bulldogs have already knocked off Wisconsin, Colorado and 10th-ranked Oregon State, and jumped from unranked in the preseason to the top 10.

But even a perfect season - not impossible considering the rest of the schedule - will not guarantee the Bulldogs a spot in a major bowl. Fresno State plays in the

WAC, which is not considered a power conference. The BCS gives berths to the champions of the ACC, Big East, Big 12, Big Ten, Pacific-10 and SEC.

Fresno coach Pat Hill, formerly an assistant with the Cleveland Browns and Baltimore Ravens, beefed up the nonconference schedule in an effort to squeeze into the bowl picture.

It might not happen. And that's a shame. It's a shame because that FSU didn't lose by 32 to North Carolina, and yet this FSU has a better chance of playing in a big bowl.

Fair? No. But that's college football.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 28). Whatever problems you had before have been either solved or forgotten. They're not even at the level of minor annoyances any more. Are you in love or what? It sure looks like it from here, and it looks to be with a fascinating intellectual type. A good conversationalist is a joy. Don't be afraid to make the commitment.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) - Today is a 7 - Confer with others who share your goals. It's a great day for conversations. Once you figure out exactly what you want to accomplish, getting there will be easy. The hard part is keeping everyone else on track.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) - Today is a 7 - Face whatever has you intimidated, whatever it is that you don't want to do. Odds are good this is the demon who's guarding the door to the treasure - the treasure with your name on it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 10 - How's your French? Your Spanish? Your Japanese? Now is the perfect time to learn a new language. Knowing other languages leads to adventure, and possibly soon.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 5 - If you can buy widgets cheap at Point A and sell them for a lot at Point B, you can earn enough to get tickets for yourself and your sweetie to Point C this weekend. It's worth a try, but don't leave anything to chance. Get everything in writing.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is a 7 - Let somebody else do the talking. Not only will you learn a lot, but it could be quite entertaining. Your resident expert would love to expound. Offer encouragement.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is a 6 - Thank heavens it's Friday! Your fingers are worked down almost to the bone. You'll have

enough energy left to get through another busy day, but barely enough. Can you take extra hours for extra money? You can sleep tomorrow or the next day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct 22) - Today is an 8 - There may be several suitors vying for your attention. Maybe you should throw a party and invite them all. Since they're all intellectuals, the conversation should be outstanding.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is a 7 - You should have everything in almost perfect order by now. There are just a few more details to work out. Blast through them so that you can entertain over the weekend. Not a big crowd this time. An intimate and significant interlude.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is an 8 - Send out packages, confer with associates and ask for favors. Even somebody who turned you down before could comply. You're charming, true, but it's not just that. Conditions are now in your favor. Don't wait. Tomorrow will be much different.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is a 5 - There's plenty of work involved, but you could be the boss. That's a natural talent of yours, so it wouldn't be bad. You get bored when your life is too easy. A challenge you take on now will make or save you a bundle.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is a 10 - You're looking so good, you're liable to get away with just about anything. You might even talk your sweetheart into financing a weekend trip, or at least a night on the town. Then, see what else you can talk him or her into.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 6 - You're very good at sorting money right now, both yours and other people's. You're learning a lot in the process, too. Keep most of what you discover to yourself, and keep most of what you earn in the bank.

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